

August 8, 2005

CHFS FOCUS

CHFS Focus Employee Spotlight: Zach Ramsey, Division of Fraud, Waste and Abuse/Identification and Prevention

*Zach Ramsey: Good Steward
of Public Programs.*

Zach Ramsey, director of the Division of Fraud, Waste and Abuse/Identification and Prevention (FWAIP) in the Office of Inspector General, and his staff of 27 work diligently every day to identify and prevent fraud, waste and abuse in the Medicaid program and all other public assistance programs administered by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services.



"Zach's division is the newest addition to OIG and was specifically created to address Governor Fletcher's and Dr. Holsinger's focus on preventing and detecting waste, fraud and abuse," said Inspector General Robert J. Benvenuti, III. "I am very pleased to have someone of Zach's intellect and dedication overseeing this critical area. Zach's program knowledge is second to none. The commonwealth benefits greatly from his experience and expertise."

FWAIP has three branches: Medicaid Provider and Third Party Compliance; Programs Enforcement; and Drug Enforcement and Professional Practices, formerly located in the Department for Public Health and often thought of as the KASPER branch, although it is involved in a whole menu of drug enforcement-related functions. The duties and responsibilities of the Division of Program Integrity, formerly in the Department for Medicaid Services, were also absorbed within the new OIG division.

FWAIP was designed with growth in mind as CHFS increases its overall efforts related to identifying and preventing fraud, waste and abuse. In fiscal year 2005, FWAIP was responsible for the recovery of more than \$40 million in Medicaid overpayments through third party liability efforts and other post-payment review activities.

"I am extremely fortunate to work with such a talented and dedicated group of individuals and have been very impressed with their leadership and commitment to this area," Ramsey said.

Ramsey was the director of the Division of Program Integrity in the Department for Medicaid Services from September 2001 and through most of the reorganization that moved the division's functions to the OIG in 2004.

The former division was responsible for identification, enforcement and referrals on issues of Medicaid fraud and abuse, including post-payment review and collection, accounts receivable oversight, third party liability, drug rebate disputes and administrative functions such as provider enrollment, Open Records and coordination of administrative appeals.

Ramsey also was a staff attorney in the Cabinet's Office of Legal Services beginning in September of 1995. In that position he primarily represented Medicaid on a wide range of legal and administrative matters. Before joining state government he was in private practice in Lexington.

"I take great pride and satisfaction in public service and representing the commonwealth and the administration," Ramsey said. "Even though I no longer serve the Cabinet as lawyer to client, I approach my duties and my stewardship of public funds as a fiduciary. I thoroughly enjoy interacting with and managing other people and the daily challenges of the critical functions within this Cabinet."

Ramsey received a bachelor's degree in inter-disciplinary engineering from Purdue University, in 1987 and completed his juris doctorate work at the University of Kentucky College of Law in 1992.

In his spare time, Ramsey enjoys basketball, softball, golf and hiking, or just going to the gym or working in the yard. "And, if I'm not doing that or watching my kids participating in various activities, I enjoy reading or a good movie," he said. Ramsey and his wife, Lisa, have two daughters, 8-year-old Olivia and 3-year-old Kate.

CHFS Focus Program Profile: Out of Home Care Branch

By Anya Armes Weber

With more than 6,000 foster children in state custody, the Out of Home Care Branch in the Division of Protection and Permanency has the heavy responsibility of finding permanent homes and supervising care for children removed from their homes for abuse, neglect, dependency or other tragic circumstances. The branch oversees all programs related to foster care in Kentucky.

Foster care can be temporary while children wait to return to their own families, or it can be a long-term placement



August 8, 2005

CHFS FOCUS

when conditions at home don't improve and parental rights are terminated. In some of these cases, foster care leads to forever families. About 88 percent of all state adoptions are by foster caregivers.

While some foster children stay in group or therapeutic homes, most are placed with families certified by the Cabinet to provide care for them.

"Like any other state, we always need more foster homes to keep up with the demand for homes for children," Out of Home Care Branch Manager Mary Ellen Nold said.

To meet the need, service regions target prospective foster families through recruitment campaigns.

Through diligent recruitment, local P&P offices work to meet community needs for foster care by engaging community partners – including business, local government and the faith community – to get the word out and raise awareness of foster care needs. Nold said her branch works closely with recruitment staff to provide training to support child placements.

Nold recently answered several questions about her branch and its work with families that care for children.

Q: What is involved in the process to become a foster family?

A: The Cabinet dually approves families for foster and adoptive care. Some parents may not want to do both, and that is OK.

The first step is to send an interested family a packet of information describing the process and the children we serve.

Next, we invite the parents to an informational meeting – this is a group meeting – where they learn more about what it takes and means to be a foster or adoptive parent.

The third step is training for the parents. This is a 30-hour training, and we also can begin family consultations at this time. Staff ask questions about what families are learning in class. It's all part of the home study process.

Q: How does the Cabinet learn about prospective foster families and decide who becomes a foster caregiver?

A: During the pre-service training and home study process, case workers and parents are given the opportunity to learn about the program and if the prospective parent is a good match.

We do a family profile that gives us information about parenting styles and lifestyles. And we get credit and personal references.



We do check finances, and families must have income outside of the foster care income. The state reimburses them for their expenditures.

As for background checks, we check all states' records for child abuse and criminal background issues. We will do this check for everyone older than 18 in the household. And all adults

older than 18 in the house must go to through the training. We compile all of our information to finalize our study of the family.

Once approval is granted, the family will go into a pool of people who are waiting for placements.

Q: Do you take the family's information at face value?

A: We verify what they tell us through our background checks and home study and through their participation in pre-service training.

Q: Is a home study required?

A: Yes. The state will do home studies for placement of the children in Department for Community Based Services-approved families. Those families do not pay a fee for home studies. The state also contracts with some outside child-placing agencies and it's their responsibility to do family studies for homes where those agencies place children. They do the training, the background checks and the home studies. If those families decide to adopt their foster children, we will do the final check.

Q: Who makes the placement decisions?

A: They are made at the regional level.

Q: When a family becomes a foster family, are they open to visits from caseworkers at any time, or are visits made by appointment?

A: Generally we make appointments. Sometimes we will drop by, at least when there is a foster child in the home. It's required that we visit the families once a month when there is a child in the home. Foster children have their own separate caseworkers who also visit the child in the home once a month.

Q: Do you check to see if families are following procedures?

August 8, 2005

CHFS FOCUS

A: Yes, in monthly checks as well as through an annual review of their strengths and needs.

Q: What is the formula for reimbursing families financially?

A: The federal regulations are based on age and needs.

Q: Does the Cabinet also check the records of our foster care contractors?

A: The Office of Inspector General does yearly reviews of the licensure procedures and presents their report to us.

Q: Is there a certain agency that guides your branch?

A: The Cabinet's child protection program is accredited by the Council on Accreditation – COA. We are the third state to become accredited, and we were the first state to voluntarily ensure our protection and permanency services meet and our children and families receive the best standards of care.

Q: How can people interested in fostering get the information packet you mentioned?

A: They can call (800) 232-5437.

Holsinger discusses health insurance, wellness at forums

By Anya Armes Weber

At last week's Secretary's Forums in Frankfort, Secretary James W. Holsinger Jr., M.D., welcomed about 900 staff who attended the third installment of forums to hear the latest Cabinet news and ask questions.



Holsinger spoke on the Cabinet's involvement in creating the employee health insurance program for 2006. CHFS has made 49 recommendations to the blue ribbon panel crafting the plan. State government will provide health insurance coverage for state employees and their families through a self-insurance system. A third-party administrator will be chosen through a competitive bidding process to manage and coordinate the program. "Since that contract is in open procurement, there is a lot we don't know yet," Holsinger said. "More information will flow in to all employees within the next couple of months."

The state's new smoking cessation hot line is up and running, Holsinger said. Smoking is now the state's number one killer and research has shown that such hot lines can actually reduce smoking rates.

The quit line – (800) QUIT NOW – offers counseling and support to help people stop smoking. Another outreach activity scheduled to begin later this month is a series of tobacco forums, Holsinger said. Staff will travel across the state exchanging ideas with Kentuckians who are concerned about the impact of smoking on their communities.

Wellness was another focus of the forum. Holsinger introduced CHFS Worksite Wellness Coordinator Jill Pfankuch who is planning activities to help CHFS staff become healthier through better personal choices.

Lifestyle decisions make a big difference in our health, Holsinger said. "It's very simple," he said. "We have got to take more control of our lives and our health status."

Staff can soon find a summary of the forums online on the Cabinet's Intranet site. Regional staff also will have access to a forum video to be distributed in the coming weeks.

Staff invited to attend State Fair this month

By Anya Armes Weber

Mark your calendars to attend this year's Kentucky State Fair Aug. 18-28 at Louisville's Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center.



The Cabinet once again will be featured in a comprehensive exhibit at the 11-day event. "Get Moving on the Path to Better Health" is the theme for the CHFS exhibit and features information, screenings and other activities to encourage families to increase their physical activity and make healthy nutrition choices.

Visitors will have the opportunity to undergo screenings for blood pressure, bone density and glucose levels and receive information about family services, too. It gives Kentuckians a great opportunity to address their overall health and well-being.

CHFS employees are especially encouraged to attend the fair on Sunday, Aug. 21, which has been designated "CHFS Family Day." It's the perfect day to visit with children in your family who are sure to enjoy an appearance from the nationally-acclaimed "Nutrition Magician."

There won't be any special discounts or parking passes that day, but staff who register at the CHFS booth are

August 8, 2005

CHFS FOCUS

eligible for special prize giveaways. You could win an overnight stay at a state park for a family of four or other nice prizes.

The fair is open daily from 9 a.m.-10 p.m. Advance discount tickets may be purchased from any Kroger store for \$5 for adults and \$2 for seniors and children ages 3-12. After Aug. 17, tickets are \$7 for adults, \$3 for children and \$3 for seniors 55 and older. Children 2 and younger get in free. Parking is \$5.

Log onto www.kystatefair.org or more information.

KECC campaign moves forward

By Anya Armes Weber

The Cabinet's Kentucky Employees Charitable Campaign is in full swing, and staff across the state should have received their pledge cards and KECC booklets.



Undersecretary for Human Services Mike Fields, Cabinet KECC coordinator, reminds employees that they can give to any 501(c)3 charity through the campaign, or they can choose one of the six featured partner charities.

Because the six approved partner charities of KECC pay 100 percent of the administrative costs, KECC charges nonpartner charities a 10 percent fee for providing this service. Donations to "write-in" charities must be at least \$24.

Contact your KECC coordinator for more information or to return your pledge card. Log onto www.kecc.org for more information about the campaign.

Charity profile: Christian Appalachian Project

The Christian Appalachian Project (CAP) works to raise the standard of living in Appalachia by offering programs that attempt to cut the roots of poverty and promote independence and dignity. CAP serves all 49 Appalachian counties in Kentucky, most of which are the most economically depressed areas of the state.

Fewer than 50 percent of the heads of households in these counties have a high school education. CAP believes education is the most important element to help families

move out of poverty and develop the skills and resources they need to become self-sufficient.

Some of the programs administered by CAP include:

- **Adult Education/School On Wheels** -- A program that provides literacy and GED classes in both classroom settings and in the homes of individuals who are unable to travel to school.
- **JobStart** -- Provides a 12-week job readiness course for individuals preparing to enter the workforce.
- **Child Development Centers** -- Provides activities geared toward family literacy and educational growth.

CAP's volunteer opportunities include in-home training in independent living skills, self-advocacy and supported employment to people with disabilities, staffing used clothing and "department" stores for families, providing adult education and assisting the elderly.

For more information about the Christian Appalachian Project, log onto <http://www.christianity.com/cap>.

CHFS Focus Health Tip of the Week: Why is breastfeeding important?

By Anne Parr, R.N.

While many people are aware that breastfeeding boosts baby's immunity against a variety of illnesses and infections, there are numerous other advantages to children, women, families and society. Here are just 13 other reasons to breastfeed.



1. Breast milk provides all the nutrition your baby needs for the first six months.
2. Your baby will have a lower risk of gastroenteritis; respiratory, urinary tract and ear infections; eczema; and childhood diabetes.
3. Breastfeeding reduces mother's risk of breast, ovarian and uterine cancer, as well as osteoporosis.
4. Breast milk is always available and at the right temperature. It can also be pumped and put in regular baby bottles so others besides mom can help with feeding and enjoy bonding with baby this way.
5. The price is right: Breast milk is free.

6. Breastfed babies usually have higher IQ scores and better school performance from increased visual, motor and oral development.
7. Breastfeeding helps develop a strong emotional bond with your child, which can lead to better parenting and may even decrease the incidence of child abuse.
8. Decreased risk of obesity for baby later in life.
9. Breast milk is delivered without any pollution, unnecessary packaging or waste.
10. Women who breastfeed regain their figures sooner than women who bottle feed. Your body burns about 500 calories a day when making breast milk.
11. Breastfeeding is associated with a reduced risk of sudden infant death syndrome (crib death), childhood cancers, juvenile onset diabetes, ulcerative colitis, Hodgkin's disease and other chronic digestive diseases.
12. Breastfeeding also decreases the incidence and severity of allergies for baby.
13. Breastfeeding can help you recover faster after childbirth due to decreased postpartum bleeding, increased uterine involution, less postpartum depression and faster return to pre-pregnancy weight.

For more information on breastfeeding, visit the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action and La Leche League International at <http://www.lalecheleague.org/> or contact the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program For Women, Infants And Children (WIC) in the Department for Public Health.

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber



Employee Enrichment is a weekly feature for CHFS staff. These tips for making work better focus on team building, customer service and personal development.

Last week's tip featured methods to cope with stress in a healthy way from Consultant Monika Jensen of the Aviary Group, a communications and organizational development

agency in Ontario, Canada. This week, Jensen suggests how to deal with a coworker who is under stress.

"It's easy to get swept up in the passions of someone else's emotional behavior," she says. While acknowledging your own feelings is important, keeping your cool is critical. Get a handle on your own emotions first so you are capable of diffusing the emotions of others and try to understand the underlying reasons for them.

Jensen offers these tips for helping stressed coworkers:

- Give them a cooling off period.
- Think before you speak. Examine potential positive and negative reaction to how you address them and their problem. Choose the most productive way to express yourself.
- Put yourself in the other person's shoes. Ask questions, and actively listen.
- Don't take their reactions personally if they get upset with you. Think about the long-term work relationship.
- If you are too involved in the circumstances, suggest the person talk to someone who is not as connected to the situation.